Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague

Student:	**Bc. Tadeáš Kopecký**
Advisor:	**Doc. PhDr. Julie Chytilová, Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**Education and HIV: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa**

***OVERALL ASSESSMENT** (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):*

The thesis investigates the relationship between education and HIV variables in 22 African countries. It looks specifically on correlation between education and HIV status but also on variables which might decrease the occurrence of HIV such as knowledge about HIV, use of condoms and number of sexual partners. The results show non-linear relationship between education and HIV suggesting that certain levels of education are related to riskier sexual behavior. The main contribution of the thesis is not only estimating the hypotheses on larger number of countries but also exploring other HIV related variables more into depth.

The thesis is well structured and written. Regarding the literature review, the author uses relevant sources and presents it in a logical way starting with macro findings and proceeding to micro evidence.

The author presents the dataset and variables used in analysis transparently. I just could not find the information if the country datasets are representative. Based on weights and other hints I would assume so but it would be good to state it explicitly since it is an important information for generalizability of results. As a minor point, the author excludes observations with missing information from the analysis saying that it should not influence the results because of still high number of observations. This explanation is not correct because it depends on type of attrition (random vs. non-random). I agree it is hard to assess this question but it could be tested a bit, e.g. comparing observations with and without missing info. In a similar vein, some type of imputation methods could have been explored but it goes a bit beyond the scope of master thesis. Otherwise, Tadeáš deals well with other limitations and problems with data.

Empirical strategy is based on logit regression with fixed-effects on regional level. It is an appropriate methodology, however, I would appreciate slightly different robustness checks. First, I would exclude part 6.1. describing theory of logit model. It is a well-known model and it seems to me redundant to define it. Second, probit and logit models typically lead to the same results and therefore it is of no value to have probit as a robustness check. On the other hand, I would like to see fixed-effects not only on regional but also on country level as a robustness check. The sampling was not carried out in the same year, the variance is from 2008 to 2014. Even though it does not seem that there is a big heterogeneity across countries, it would be still nice to show that the year of sampling really does not play a big role. Lastly, I would like to see different specifications of the variable *HIV knowledge.* It is defined so that it is equal one only if participants answered all three questions correctly. It assumes quite a high knowledge and it may cover different results on lower levels of knowledge. Therefore, cut-offs on lower number of correctly answered questions as a robustness check would be welcome.

The results are correctly interpreted highlighting the limitations. I appreciate that the author is aware that the results cannot be interpreted as causal but still tries to shed more light on mechanisms behind the results. One of the candidates why the education is positively correlated with HIV status (non-linear relationship) is different sexual behavior for certain education levels. It is clear that sexual behavior variables cannot be inserted into regressions due to their endogeneity. But it would be

Report on **Bachelor / Master Thesis**

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague

Student:	**Bc. Tadeáš Kopecký**
Advisor:	**Doc. PhDr. Julie Chytilová, Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**Education and HIV: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa**

interesting to look if there is a variation in sexual education policies on national level and try to come up with division of countries based on that information and look if it could help to explain the results. I really find interesting the result that the relationship is robust across countries (non-significant interactions). It is of high relevance for policy makers to see that even though there are high differences across countries, the relationship between education and HIV status seems to be quite similar, so I would devote more space to this result in the thesis.

Overall, the thesis is of a high quality. There are some details in the analysis which could be improved but in general those are only minor issues. From all abovementioned reasons, I recommend the thesis for defense and suggest grade A, výborně.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY		POINTS
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	18
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	27
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	25
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**90**
GRADE	*(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)*	**1**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: **PhDr. Václav Korbel**

DATE OF EVALUATION: **22.1.2017**

_____
Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

Strong	Average	Weak
20	10	0

METHODS: *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

Strong	Average	Weak
30	15	0

CONTRIBUTION: *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

Strong	Average	Weak
30	15	0

MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

Strong	Average	Weak
20	10	0

Overall grading:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE		
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	2	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	4	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě